

## HB 6158

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Good morning Senator Gerratana, Representative Johnson and members of the Public Health Committee. My name is Susan Amster and I am the Practice Administrator for Willows Pediatric Group in Fairfield County. I have a Masters in Health Services Administration and I am a practicing Pediatric Physician Assistant with over 33 years of clinical experience. I am here this morning in support of House Bill 6158; An Act Concerning Vaccine Distribution.

I am the administrator for a small business that has 42 employees. Our business is to provide a medical home for infants children and adolescents birth through college. Because of the current vaccine mandate which requires us to obtain 12 of 14 childhood vaccines plus flu vaccine from the State of CT. I am now faced with an operating budget deficit of almost \$200,000. What does this mean to our business? It could translate to job loss; either through layoffs, terminations or not filling vacancies. It also could mean stopping free educational programs that we have provided to our families because we will not have the staff to run them. It means the strong possibility of decreasing our business hours because of the cost to keep a building open such as electricity, heat etc, as well as lack of staff coverage. Presently we provide 7 day a week 362 day a year care for our families if we decrease our operating hours our patients who require care will need to be seen in the emergency room, a place that is already overburdened and understaffed. This also goes against the medical home model that our government is preaching. I regularly ask myself why/how did this all come about when our families were happy, our quality of care ranked by the insurance companies was exemplary and our vaccine rates were close to 99%.

Who gained from this new mandate? Well I am not a politician or lawmaker but what I see are the Insurance Companies now paying a lower total aggregate amount for vaccines for CT children into the State's general fund, (not even a separate vaccine fund) I see insurance premiums that have been raised and I see our practice reimbursements flat or decreased. So where is the money? We would love an answer to these questions.

As an administrator I should say to my business “stop giving vaccines to the children” send them to the health department and let the public health care system administer the childhood vaccines. Then I could downsize our staff, many of whom are single moms or a family’s main bread winner, and maybe their termination might make us budget neutral.

But as a Pediatric Physician Assistant, the clinician part of my heart says how can we send our infants to someone who has no relationship with our families, who might not be as skilled giving the vaccines and supporting the families, and who is to say that our Parents will actually go the health department once they leave our office.

And ladies and gentleman I believe that the insurance companies, and those in the legislature or Governor’s office that initially were responsible for this mandate perhaps counted on our emotions and soft hearts.

Please do not place us in a position to make these kinds of choices. Medical practices should have an option where they procure vaccine and physicians should not be forced to obtain them from the State of Connecticut or any other one source. Thank you for your attention. I would be happy to answer any questions.

Respectfully submitted and supported by the Physicians and Practitioners at  
Willows Pediatric Group

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